

wonder as I walk through the Capitol—its beauty, its iconic power really defy my attempts at articulation. More than any other building, it is the exterior of the Capitol that we associate with the freedoms, values, and privileges of American citizenship. But on the inside we tell so many stories about who we are as a people, what our aspirations and our dreams might be.

Constantino Brumidi was 47 years old, a painter, when he came to our shores. As is often the case with the immigrant experience, he landed here with nothing but a dream, and within a relatively short period of years he was here at the Capitol, using his talent and the great tradition that he exalted, to turn the interior of our Capitol into something much more alive and real than just the walls and the columns that held it up. He had a Greek father, an Italian mother; some might very well say the best of both worlds. And the coincidence should not be lost on us, that classical wall painting, the medium of which he was a master, originated in Greece and reached a high degree of refinement during the Roman Republic. So he brought with him his classical training and influences and he became a master of that tradition. He believed that the Capitol required, as he put it, “a superior style of decoration in real fresco, like the palaces of Augustus and Nero.” In the Brumidi biography, by Capitol curator Barbara Wolanin, she so aptly writes, “his originality lay in integrating American themes into his classical repertoire. He was inspired by the great Renaissance artist Raphael, and he emulated his design of scrolls and leaves with birds and animals, but the species of squirrels and mice he painted in the Senate Wing corridors were strictly American.”

He spent 25 years painting in the Capitol Building, but that was not his only commission. One of his most notable other great works is found in New York, at the Church of Our Lady of the Scapular and Saint Stephen, which is in the Gramercy Park area of Manhattan. My predecessor, Senator Moynihan, recognized the importance of Brumidi's work at Saint Stephen's years ago. Commissioned in 1866, Brumidi painted a huge mural of Christ's crucifixion over the church's high altar, in addition to 43 murals and paintings around the walls. He was acclaimed for this work, and you can see why as you look through the Capitol, and I also hope you will also visit Saint Stephen's. The church is engaged in an important effort to preserve Brumidi's work, and I personally hope that this ceremony and the 200th anniversary of his birth will help draw attention to that effort.

As we have learned from years of effort, preserving and restoring Brumidi's work is enormously important. For decades it was obscured by moisture and leaks, and gas torch light residue, but finally in the 1980s and the 1990s his work had begun to be restored

to its original splendor. I remember coming in late at night in the Capitol on numerous occasions in the past 10 or 15 years and seeing the restorers working so meticulously to preserve and enhance and once again reveal the full beauty of his work.

Yes, he was an artist-citizen. He used his artistry on behalf of his citizenship, and he used his citizenship to elevate his art. He is reported to have said, “My one ambition and my daily prayer is that I may live long enough to make beautiful the Capitol of the one country on Earth in which there is liberty.” I believe his daily prayer was answered and I am delighted that so many of us could be here to recognize and celebrate the 200th anniversary of his birth, but even more the work he did which has stood the test of time.

MEMORIAL FOUNDATION FOR THE BLIND'S 100TH ANNIVERSARY

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, today I pay tribute to the Memorial Foundation for the Blind in Worcester, MA as they celebrate a century of good deeds in the Commonwealth. I would especially like to congratulate the board of directors on this special day, led by President Lawrence M. Raymond and Vice President Janet LaBreck. Without the board's leadership and dedication this day may not have been possible.

For most of our Nation's history, blind and visually impaired men and women, like all people with disabilities, were treated like second-class citizens. They had fewer opportunities to succeed in school and work and participate in the life of their communities, and their special needs were too often considered a burden without remedy and not worth addressing.

Since those dark days, enormous progress has been made in promoting a life full of possibilities for blind and visually impaired men and women. Leaders like Helen Keller changed hearts and minds by showing us all that what is often seen as a limitation can be a blessing in disguise. But much of the credit also goes to local organizations such as the memorial foundation, that cared about these basic issues and stood up for civil rights. It represents the best in progressive philanthropic organizations that changed communities one at a time, and encouraged the rest of the Nation to follow suit. Their great legacy is a stronger and fairer America.

In Worcester County, the foundation operated a special home and provided support services for many years, making sure that a safe and welcoming shelter existed in the community. In 1960 it shifted its focus to providing financial assistance to one and later on to many agencies and organizations in the community that exemplify its giving spirit. They continue to do so today, adapting to new developments, supporting assistive technologies and giving blind and visually impaired men and women unprecedented new independence.

This new century holds great promise for further extraordinary progress, especially in the area of employment. I am proud to join the memorial foundation in its ongoing efforts for greater justice and equality. You represent the very best in our Commonwealth and our Nation.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

SALUTE TO EDWIN LEE ALLEN

• Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I rise today in celebration of the 95th birthday later this week of a truly beloved Iowa artist, Lee Allen.

Born in Muscatine on September 16, 1910, Edwin Lee Allen has called Iowa home for his entire life. The son of an engineer, Lee was raised with a unique blend of curiosity and problem-solving ability. As a young boy, his father gave him a set of oil paints and Lee quickly developed into an excellent artist. At the age of 18, Lee won a blue ribbon for oil painting at the Iowa State fair. Another artist who won an award at that fair was Grant Wood, later to become famous for his painting “American Gothic.” Lee and Grant Wood became friends and, as director of a Federal fine arts project during the Depression, Grant Wood asked Lee to work for him.

In 1935, Lee studied under Diego Rivera in Mexico City. Upon returning to Iowa City, Lee won a competition to paint murals for post offices. Two were produced. One, “Soil Conservation,” still hangs in the Onawa post office, and another, “Conservation of Wildlife,” hangs in the Emmetsburg post office. “Soil Conservation” was selected for the American Century exhibit at the Whitney Museum of American Art in 1999.

In 1937, Lee began working for the University of Iowa as a medical illustrator in the Eye Department. He quickly distinguished himself as a medical illustrator, but also made many contributions to the medical profession. For example, in 1941, frustrated with then-current gonioscopes, Lee developed the “Allen-Thorpe Gonioscope,” which was sold by the Bausch and Lomb Company. He also developed the “Allen Dot” which diminished flare and reflections on cameras designed for photographing eyes.

Following World War II, Lee began making artificial eyes. And in 1976, he retired from the University of Iowa to open his own company, Iowa Eye Prosthetics. Using the same scientific mind and artist's skill, Lee revolutionized the process of making artificial eyes. His development of the “painting lens” allowed ocularists—artificial eye artisans—to develop incredibly comfortable and life-like artificial eyes. His Iowa Eye Implant provided for a very natural eye movement. Because of Lee's success and dedication, today artificial eyes look every bit as natural as the real thing.

Throughout his career, Lee continued to paint and win awards, and his art hangs in museums across the country.